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RWANDA

SUCCESS STORY

Rwanda's Post-Harvest Handling & Storage project increases economic freedom for women and families.

Increasing food security through proper storage and handling increases economic security for families.



Photo by Jennifer Jukanovich

Nine-month old, Pierre, listens with his mother, Clementine, to USAID's Lauralea Gilpin and representatives from the World Food Program, as they explain how a new storage facility and increased trainings will benefit the Coamanya cooperative.

"I used to keep the maize at home, but it would spoil. I had to constantly watch that no thieves would take my maize. Now I am able to look after my children, because I can leave my maize in the storage and trust there are no thieves. Now I can make more money for food and school fees."

Clementine, maize and bean farmer, Coamanya cooperative

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Clementine, Genevieve and Dusabe are three Rwandan women who represent the hopes of USAID's Post-Harvest Handling and Storage (PHHS) project to increase food security and thus improve economic security for families.

Clementine is a maize farmer in the Coamanya cooperative. Prior to having the cooperative and a common storage center, she was constantly worried that thieves would steal her maize. Thieves were not her only concern. Insects would infest her harvest, as it was stored on the ground outside her home, causing her to lose up to 40% of her hard labor. As she feeds her nine-month old son, Pierre, she says with a smile, "Now I am able to look after my children, because I can leave my maize in the storage center and trust there are no thieves."

Genevieve's business acumen is apparent the moment you meet her. She has been a mobilizing member of the Coamanya cooperative for four years. For these new cooperatives, the process to becoming professional takes time, but Genevieve understands that, "we have no option but patience. The good thing is that the more people who see our work, the greater the market possibilities for our cooperative."

Dusabe walks three hours from Burundi, with her infant son on her back, to and from her work as a maize cleaner at the Coamanya cooperative. She knows the value of finding the consistent work this cooperative provides.

With funding from USAID, the PHHS project, in partnership with the World Food Program's Purchase for Progress (P4P) program, are providing proper storage and finding new higher-value markets for maize. Upon meeting the members of the Coamanya cooperative, Lauralea Gilpin, USAID's Contracts Officer for East Africa commented, "Today I am happy to see women participating in the cooperative and benefitting from this project."